



DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov>

1416 9th Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814



July 27, 2007

To: Groundfish Open Access Fishery Participants

Re: Groundfish Open Access Permitting Program Development: Update on Key Issues,
Opportunity for Discussion with the Department of Fish and Game

Dear Interested Party:

The California Department of Fish and Game (Department) is hosting small group discussions in July and August 2007 on the federal groundfish open access permitting process to better understand the perspectives of California constituents, and you are invited to attend. An important objective of the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is transitioning the current open access groundfish fishery into one where participation requires a federal permit. California is taking the lead on this program because a majority of the participants in the federal open access fishery are California-based, and such a program is expected to impact California fishers and California coastal communities more so than other coastal states.

In the 2001 Federal Groundfish Strategic Plan, the Council announced its intentions to bring "the current open access participants ... into the limited entry program and the number of participants reduced to those who are most dependent on and committed to the fishery". In September 2006, the Council agreed to initiate discussions regarding conversion of the open access groundfish fishery into limited entry management; however the process has taken longer than expected due to Council staff work loads and other more urgent objectives. In June 2007, the Council continued to refine alternatives and selected a qualifying window period of April 1998 to September 2006. The current schedule calls for analysis of the alternatives to be considered by the Council at the November 2007 meeting, where a preferred alternative may be identified for intensified analysis over the winter.

We are soliciting input for developing the open access permitting alternatives that will be further analyzed. Specifically, we hope to clarify and identify any flaws or missing issues in the existing alternatives, and identify any negative repercussions to other fisheries as open access permitting proceeds. We welcome the opportunity to receive your engaged and productive input at these meetings, particularly your needs, concerns, and priorities from a California perspective.

The discussions have been scheduled for the following dates and locations (Document 1):

- July 31, 2007: Trinidad, Town Hall
- August 21, 2007: Monterey, CDFG Office
- August 22, 2007: Los Alamitos, CDFG Office
- August 28, 2007: Santa Rosa, Sonoma County Water Agency Office

Please select one of the following meeting locations and RSVP to Joanna Grebel at (831) 649-2804. If you cannot attend, please select an alternate to represent you at the meeting.

Enclosed, please find information regarding updates on the progress of open access permitting, including a table and summaries of the alternatives (Document 2), a draft meeting agenda

(Document 3), frequently asked questions and answers (Document 4), and a summary of open access participation data (Document 5). Here are ways that you can participate in the interim:

- Visit the Council website at: <http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gfifq.html>
- View the Briefing Book for the June and November Council meetings at: <http://www.pcouncil.org/bb/2007/bb0307.html#groundfish>
- Visit the Department's groundfish central website at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/groundfishcentral/index.asp>

If you have questions about the meeting, please call Joanna Grebel at (831) 649-2804. I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,



Marija Vojkovich,
State/Federal Managed Species Program Manager

Attachments: Document 1: Meeting Location Information
Document 2: Table and Summary of Groundfish Open Access Permitting
Program Alternatives
Document 3: Draft Agenda
Document 4: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
Document 5: Summary of Open Access Participation Data

cc: Sonke Mastrup, Deputy Director, Resources Management and Policy Division,
Sacramento
Neil Manji, Chief of Fisheries Branch, Sacramento
Tony Warrington, Acting Regional Manager, Marine Region, Sacramento
L.B. Boydston, Fishery Advisor, Sacramento
Deb Wilson-Vandenberg, Groundfish Project Supervisor, Monterey